

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2005**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-Large
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District
Laurie Frost-Wilson, Commissioner At-Large

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District

STAFF PRESENT:

Barbara J. Lipa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission
Leonard Wolfenstein, Acting Chief, Planning Division, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT)
Jay Guy, Transportation Planner, FCDOT
Jaak Pedak, Senior Transportation Planner, FCDOT
Sheng Leu, Trail Coordinator, Department of Planning and Zoning
Ahmed Rayyan, Chief, Planning Support Branch, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

George Barker, Chairman, At-Large
Janyce Hedetniemi, Vice Chairman, Braddock District
Brian Deery, Dranesville District
Earl Flanagan, Mount Vernon District
Jeffrey Parnes, Sully District

NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Becky Cate, Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association
Wade Smith, Dranesville District

OTHERS PRESENT:

Neil McBride, Laurel Hill Task Force Number 3

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Chairman Frank de la Fe convened the meeting at 7:32 p.m. in the Fairfax County Government Center, Conference Room 2/3, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Chairman de la Fe noted that tonight the Committee would review the draft Transportation Policy Plan and asked those present to introduce themselves.

Leonard Wolfenstein indicated that the following documents had been distributed: clean version of the revised working draft, markup version showing the edits to the current Plan language, and markup version of the appendices showing the edits to the Plan. (Copies of the documents are in the date file.) He discussed how the working draft had been developed and said all input would be incorporated in a draft to be distributed to the public prior to the Planning Commission public meetings scheduled for mid-September 2005. Mr. Wolfenstein outlined the significant changes made to the current Plan: creation of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) section, addition of an appendix on transit service, revision of the right-of-way requirement appendix, and inclusion of language regarding on-road bicycle routes. He requested that the Committee review each objective and provide suggestions and comments. He then explained that the language had been modified slightly with the concept of choice introduced in Objective 1, the language had been streamlined considerably in Policy b, and “mobility impaired” had been defined in Policy d.

Earl Flanagan said he supported the fact that FCDOT staff would prepare a report compiling all of the suggestions received which would be available at the September public hearings.

Mr. Wolfenstein distributed a summary of public input regarding Transportation Policies dated June 28, 2005, a copy of which is in the date file.

Janyce Hedetniemi explained that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) revised the language to be more uniform and to ensure that the policies were broad enough to encompass specific activities.

Mr. Wolfenstein noted that the comments and attributions compiled had only been intended for the working draft stage and would be eliminated from the draft to be submitted to the public.

In response to questions from Commissioner Wilson, Ms. Hedetniemi indicated that a lot of the comments provided by the TAC had been deleted because they included jargon, outdated information, run-on sentences, contradictions, or redundancy.

Commissioner Wilson said it would be helpful to have another document that specified whether a comment had been deleted or relocated.

Responding to questions from Commissioners Lawrence and Wilson, Mr. Wolfenstein stated that the draft to be submitted to the public would include a matrix of all comments received and how they had been addressed, but said it would be difficult to capture the rationale behind every proposed change.

Commissioner Wilson suggested that the TAC provide documents that explained the proposed changes, but said it was unnecessary to recreate them.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Wilson, George Barker explained that TAC members had reviewed and finalized their proposed revisions which had been incorporated in an entirely revised Plan, but noted that they had not provided FCDOT staff a document listing specific rationale for every proposed change. He said he could provide Commissioner Wilson copies of the documents they had worked with.

Chairman de la Fe suggested that the second “through” in Objective 1 be replaced by a different word such as “via” or “use.”

Mr. Flanagan reported that the last time the Policy Plan had been revised, justification for each proposed change had been recorded and noted at the bottom of each objective and then forwarded to the Planning Commission. He added that the public had received the markup along with the original text. Chairman de la Fe replied that notations would now be listed in a matrix instead of at the bottom of each objective.

After a discussion concerning the term “Countywide Trails Map” in Policy a under Objective 1, the Committee agreed that the Policy should refer to the official version of the map.

Ms. Hedetniemi suggested that “integrate” replace “plan for” at the beginning of Policy a.

After further discussion, the Committee concurred that in Policy c the terms “Metrorail” and “the Virginia Railway Express” should be replaced by the term “mass transit” and that all objectives and policies should begin with an action verb and the phrase “Fairfax County should” needed to be deleted.

In response to a question from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Wolfenstein reported that the percentage goals of County commuters using non-motorized and public transportation had not been achieved by 2000, but said 2015 would be a more realistic timeframe. Jaak Pedak pointed out that the targets had been achieved in individual cases and the measures had been used when negotiating proffers or performing a small area analysis.

Responding to a concern expressed by Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Barker explained that the County had the ability to measure statistically whether the goals had been met as a result of the data reflected in a household survey conducted every two years. He suggested that the survey include questions to distinguish whether commuters to Tysons Corner Urban Center, other suburban centers, or the rest of the County had used non-motorized and public transportation.

Commissioner Lawrence stated that certain circumstances must be recognized when setting up quantitative goals and controls for reaching those goals inside transit station areas at Tysons Corner Urban Center and other individual developments within the County.

In response to a question from Wade Smith, Mr. Wolfenstein agreed that the percentage goals should be incorporated in the FCDOT Strategic Plan, but noted that currently staff did not have the resources to determine the measurement at the employment centers.

Commissioner Wilson suggested that the definition of “metropolitan core” be included in a parenthesis in Objective 2.

As a result of the proposals made by the Committee regarding Objective 2, Chairman de la Fe recommended that FCDOT staff incorporate language that encouraged an increase in the number of County commuters using non-motorized and public transportation through either percentage goals by a certain date if measurable or increments over a period of time.

Following deliberation on the language in Policy a under Objective 2, the Committee agreed to replace “including” with “such as” and to omit “adopted.”

Chairman de la Fe recommended that the term “Enhanced Public Transportation Corridors” introduced in Policy b be defined in the glossary.

Commissioner Wilson expressed concern about high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes being greatly promoted or emphasized in the Policy Plan since the Board of Supervisors had not adopted such a policy yet.

Responding to an observation made by Jeffrey Parnes, Chairman de la Fe recommended that high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) and HOT lanes not be identified as mass transit facilities throughout the Plan.

Chairman de la Fe suggested that a HOV be defined as having more passengers than the driver and HOT be defined as a single-occupancy vehicle that had to pay a toll.

Brian Deery indicated that the terms “public transportation” and “mass transportation” needed to be clarified.

In response to a question from Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Pedak said the Board of Supervisors had supported the establishment of HOT lanes by endorsing certain projects and concept studies.

Responding to a question from Mr. Smith, Mr. Pedak noted that “public transportation” had been broadly defined in the Policy Plan to include transit as well as carpooling and said the goals listed in Objective 2 encompassed that definition.

Mr. Flanagan recommended that the items listed inside the parenthesis following “mass transit facilities” in Policy b be deleted. Becky Cate concurred and further recommended that “for track” be removed from the second sentence in the same Policy.

Mr. Parnes commented that HOV and HOT lanes were properly incorporated in Policy b because they had supported carpooling and vanpooling.

Commissioner Wilson proposed that there be further discussion on HOT lanes so the issue would not be nonchalantly included in the Policy Plan.

Mr. Parnes suggested that Policy c specify that only HOV lanes should be provided on congested commuter routes and HOT lanes should only be provided on freeways. Mr. Smith further suggested that a HOT lane be clarified as being similar to a HOV lane.

Ms. Cate voiced her objection to providing HOT lanes on congested commuter routes because the Board of Supervisors had not adopted this policy.

Commissioner Wilson strongly recommended that language regarding HOT facilities be eliminated completely from the Plan.

Commissioner Hart concurred with the suggestion made by Mr. Parnes. He then proposed that “congested commuter routes” be defined and “Seek to” be deleted from the beginning of the second sentence in Policy c.

Mr. Wolfenstein clarified that the intent of Policy c had been to recognize that excess capacity of HOV lanes could be used as a toll mechanism.

Mr. Parnes expressed opposition to providing HOT lanes on congested commuter routes, citing that they needed limited access such as a freeway.

Chairman de la Fe suggested that HOT lanes be removed from Policy c and be added to a new policy that would explain where they would be appropriate and noted that the policy would be removed if the Board of Supervisors decided against it. Commissioner Wilson concurred.

Mr. Barker proposed that Policy c include carpooling issues and encourage HOV use of HOT lanes without a toll. Mr. Smith further recommended that a new Policy d be added that would define HOT lanes and specify its HOV element, noting that it would meet Objective 2. Mr. Wolfenstein agreed.

Mr. Pedak suggested that a policy on HOT lanes also be included under Objective 8 which referred to adequate financing for the transportation system.

Chairman de la Fe proposed that the phrase “congested commuter routes” be changed to “arterials” or a similar word.

Ms. Cate recommended that “user-friendly” be added after “more convenient” in Policy g under Objective 2. The Committee concurred.

Mr. Pedak indicated that FCDOT staff would incorporate definitions of Policy Plan terms in the glossary such as “productivity” that had been introduced in Policy h.

After a brief dialogue, the Committee decided to delete the phrase “for areas of medium to high density development” from Policy j.

Committee members recommended that FCDOT staff ensure that the terms “roadway system” and “Roadway Functional Classification System” remain consistent throughout the Policy Plan.

The Committee agreed to end the second sentence in Policy b under Objective 3 after “acceptable.”

In response to a question from Ms. Hedetniemi, Mr. Wolfenstein explained that level of service D had been considered the acceptable amount of congestion or delay when traveling during the peak period.

Chairman de la Fe and Commissioner Lawrence suggested that “neotraditional design” be defined in the glossary and Commissioner Wilson further suggested that it be replaced by “alternative design standards” in Policy c.

Commissioner Hart commented that if “neotraditional design” represented narrower pavement and elimination of parking on the street, then it should not be encouraged in the Plan.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Wolfenstein stated that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) had adopted new subdivision street standards in January 2005 in which neotraditional streets had been referenced as being acceptable on an individual basis.

Commissioner Lawrence expressed concern that imperative specifics would not be enforceable in the Policy Plan. Mr. Flanagan replied that developers had not been required to use the standards specified in the policies.

Commissioner Wilson proposed that Policy c promote the use of public streets and reference the adopted Residential Density Criteria guidelines. Mr. Wolfenstein responded that the intent of the Policy had been to support the use of an alternative street termed as “neotraditional” and for it to be accepted into the VDOT system as a public street.

Ms. Cate pointed out that the protected use of private streets would need to still be a part of the Policy Plan as long as it did not conflict with the Zoning Ordinance. She said she supported the use of neotraditional design if it allowed smaller streets and less impervious surface if accepted by VDOT.

In response to a question from Mr. Smith, Mr. Flanagan said the purpose of Policy c had been to acquire as much of a street system under the maintenance of VDOT as possible through the use of designs that would not necessarily permit the traditional type of parking.

Mr. Parnes noted that Policy c only dealt with the design for local streets, but Policy d dealt with how the streets would be accepted into the VDOT system. He suggested that both policies switch places. Mr. Flanagan replied that Policy d dealt only with roadways which were different from local streets.

Commissioner Lawrence commented that sensible parking should be accomplished through a proper street grid which was the foundation to relieve congestion.

Commissioner Wilson pointed out that many public policy issues such as parking and emergency response helped consider which street designs were acceptable according to VDOT standards.

Responding to a question from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Wolfenstein explained that Policy d indicated that streets should be included in the VDOT system for maintenance and Policy c encouraged street designs to be more flexible in terms of standards than it had been in the past.

Chairman de la Fe recommended that Policies c and d either become merged together or be better explained. Mr. Parnes further recommended that it be clarified whether the policies referred to the street grid pattern or the street pattern or both.

Commissioner Wilson proposed that FCDOT staff review the new subdivision street standards and then re-examine the two policies.

Mr. Smith suggested that the phrase “including bicycle routes and hiking trails” be removed from Objective 4 and Mr. Parnes further suggested that “Map” be inserted after “Countywide Trails Plan.”

Mr. Parnes recommended that “or County standards” replace “and County standards” at the end of Policy a.

Commissioner Wilson concurred with the suggestion made by Mr. Parnes to relocate the phrase “clearly marked” ahead of the phrase “bicycle and pedestrian features” in Policy b.

The Committee deliberated on whether accessibility features such as countdown and audible pedestrian signals and the requirement to design trails and sidewalks to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act standards should be incorporated in Policy b.

In response to a question from Ms. Cate, Mr. Wolfenstein noted that the term “activity center” would be defined in the glossary.

Mr. Parnes pointed out that the Transportation Demand Management acronym had not been consistently used throughout the Policy Plan such as in Policies e and g under Objective 5.

Chairman de la Fe indicated that the new Policy b in the markup version needed to be added prior to the Policy b in the clean copy and the letters of the subsequent policies needed to be changed accordingly.

Mr. Parnes suggested that “transit” be changed to “mass transit” in Policy c.

Ms. Cate recommended that the word “major” be eliminated from Policy e and Commissioner Wilson further recommended that the phrase “major employers, including the private sector and all levels of government” be changed to “public and private employers.” The Committee concurred.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Hart, Mr. Wolfenstein explained that the purpose of Policy f had been to indicate that the County had recently developed a commuter services program that had been directed toward residential developments.

Commissioner Lawrence suggested that “developers” replace “developments” in Policy f.

In response to a comment from Commissioner Lawrence, Chairman de la Fe requested that he work on the language in Policy h with FCDOT staff.

Responding to a request from Commissioner de la Fe, Mr. Wolfenstein stated that FCDOT staff would meet with an editor to make sure all the terms were spelled out the first time they appeared in the Plan and be referred to by their acronyms afterward.

In response to a question from Ms. Cate, Mr. Parnes noted that the statement “and should reflect an overall goal of reducing reliance on the single occupancy vehicle” had been deleted from Objective 6 due to redundancy.

Chairman de la Fe reminded the Committee that the term “HOV/HOT” would be removed from the proposed text.

Ms. Cate referred to Policy a under Objective 6 and suggested that priority should also be given to pedestrian safety improvements.

Mr. Wolfenstein distributed written comments dated June 13, 2005 from Bruce Wright, Hunter Mill District, Non-Motorized Trails Committee, a copy of which is in the date file. He called attention to Mr. Wright’s disagreement with the deletion of the original Policy a text beginning with “particularly the encouragement of transit-oriented development...” Mr. Wolfenstein said the purpose of the objective had been to list policies that would help determine what transportation projects would be cost-effective.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Lawrence, Mr. Wolfenstein noted that the purpose of Policy a had been to facilitate the Land Use Plan through transportation improvements. Commissioner Lawrence requested that the Policy be reworded to reflect this purpose.

Following changes proposed by Committee members, it had been decided that the purposes of Objectives 6 and 7 needed to be established and their policies needed to be rewritten.

In response to a recommendation from Chairman de la Fe, Mr. Wolfenstein and Mr. Barker agreed to have FCDOT staff and the TAC re-examine and revise the entire proposed Plan, particularly the sequencing and language of Objectives 6 through 9.

Chairman de la Fe advised the attendees to e-mail proposed changes and suggestions to the Committee as a group. He then requested that staff also reevaluate the "Listing of Roadways by Functional Classification" section.

Ms. Cate commented that the text should always govern County Policy and not be dependent on the Transportation Plan Map and said she was hesitant to remove specific text such as the footnotes that referred to the areas designated as Virginia Byways on Page 10 of the markup version.

Mr. Flanagan indicated that inclusion of a definition of "Monorail" in the proposed Appendix II had been among the Area Plans Review nominations recently adopted by the Mount Vernon Council. He said Monorail had been recommended in the Beltway Rail Study and had also been under consideration for Tysons Corner and other areas.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 p.m.
Frank A. de la Fe, Chairman

For a verbatim record of this meeting, reference may be made to the audio recording which can be found in the Fairfax County, Virginia Planning Commission Office.

Meeting by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Minutes by: Kara A. DeArrastia

Approved on: October 26, 2005

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission